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# CITY OF ATASCADERO

## GENERAL PLAN

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT




**CITY OF ATASCADERO**

**GENERAL PLAN**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
**ELEMENT**

ADOPTED BY THE  
ATASCADERO CITY COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 12, 1995





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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

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## TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT IS  
THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM AND THE  
SOLUTIONS WHICH ARE AVAILABLE  
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN  
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SOLUTIONS WHICH ARE AVAILABLE



## X. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

During most of the twentieth century communities and their political leadership have taken a laissez-faire attitude toward business development within their communities. The attitude has been that cities would provide basic public services and that businesses would operate independently within the framework of these services to provide necessary goods and services to local residents. While this basic policy paradigm has worked well during most of the century, changes in the national and international economy have made it necessary for communities to develop a more pro-active attitude in support of existing businesses, entrepreneurs and local industry.

The development in this century of modern transportation and communication technologies have changed the way goods and services are manufactured, distributed and purchased. The continued rapid development of these technologies and increasing competition between communities regionally, nationally and even internationally no longer guarantees that individual communities can maintain their economic position without significant effort and attention to the business community. In large part, because of state-wide tax policies, communities that lose their economic base as a result of the competition for retail sales, commercial services and industry, will be penalized. The penalty will be shortage of revenue for necessary public services, the possibility of high local unemployment, vacancies in commercial and industrial buildings, and a general reduction in the quality of life.

### A. BASIC COMMUNITY GOALS

The City of Atascadero shall act to promote the economic health and vitality of its businesses to insure the creation of jobs, the promotion of entrepreneurial efforts, and to generate adequate tax revenue for public services. Toward this end the following goals, though not prioritized, are basic to the maintenance of the overall quality of the local economy:

1. Protection and promotion of the overall commercial service and retail business sectors of the local economy to promote local patronage, strong performance in satisfying local demand for goods and services, and the creation of entry level jobs.
2. Promotion of the downtown core area to preserve its historic function as the City's commercial center, to improve the community's entertainment and recreation attractions, and to





promote tourism and the traveler industry as a growth industry in the community.

3. Recruitment of new commercial services and business enterprises which will broaden the City's economic base, improve the local availability of goods and services, and improve and promote the economic viability of existing businesses.
4. Support for the development of industrial areas that lead to the recruitment or development of high technology, emerging technology, and professional service businesses that will provide the community with a base of moderate and high salary career-oriented jobs.
5. To provide the resources from business activity and increasing tax revenues to support the community's high level of environmental, social, and educational quality, and to maintain and improve the City's infrastructure.

B. MUNICIPAL POLICIES TO PROMOTE AND SUSTAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Changes in national and international economy have made it necessary for communities to develop a more pro-active attitude in support of existing businesses, entrepreneurs, and local industry. The following policies are hereby adopted by the City Council of the City of Atascadero as part of the General Plan to improve the local economy:

1. DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

(a) Duties

The Economic Development Commission will be organized, directed, and responsible to the City Council. The Commission will replace the current Economic Round Table. The commissioners will meet monthly to discuss progress in meeting economic development goals, to formulate economic development strategies, and to direct staff activities. The Commission will be responsible for periodic reports to the City Council summarizing the state of the local economy.

(b) Staff

The Commission should be staffed by an economic development professional or executive director.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF A PRO-BUSINESS COMMUNITY IMAGE

The business license office is the one arm of the City that has annual interaction with all businesses in the community





and especially with new businesses. The office should be oriented for the following services:

- (a) providing information to businesses (especially new businesses or start-ups) on local resources businesses can access to support their success;
- (b) maintaining data on businesses that is useful for economic development purposes; and
- (c) interacting with businesses in a positive, consumer oriented manner.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSUMER ORIENTED ATTITUDE BY ALL DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY

In differing degrees, the staff in other departments of the city interact with businesses and community residents. Staff in every department should emphasize a consumer oriented attitude. A priority should be placed on assisting businesses and business development as problem solvers, rather than regulators.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF A REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

A redevelopment agency is a powerful economic development tool that the City shall use. Areas such as the downtown and industrial areas will need long-term community support to become economically successful. The City shall use the redevelopment mechanism to promote its economic success and obtain funding for economic development programs.

5. SUPPORT AND PROMOTION OF THE CITY'S INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Development of the City's industrial areas will benefit from active promotion. Industries to be attracted should include those that will improve the City's economic base and support and/or augment existing businesses. Promotion of industrial areas can be accomplished by the Economic Development Commission. A Redevelopment Agency can acquire and assemble land, and provide beneficial infrastructure improvements to enhance the marketability of the land.

6. SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER CITY ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

The City's economic development program will be most successful when it operates as a team effort and is inclusive of City staff, the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement Association (BIA) and other organizations interested in assisting the community's businesses. The Economic Development Commission should also



form close ties with county-wide organizations such as the Private Industry Council, the San Luis Obispo Visitor and Conference Bureau and the County's Economic Vitality Corporation.

C. PROMOTION OF SPECIFIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The City of Atascadero will promote specific economic development projects that should have immediate benefit to the City such as sales tax generators. These projects should have high economic development priority and support. The City may take the following actions to promote the development of these projects.

1. SITE SELECTION

The City shall identify sites for those projects that the community feels are best suited for development.

Within the context of available resources and in partnership with owners, qualified developers and builders, the City shall support the preparation of proposed sites for immediate development for the purposes specified by providing as much assistance as fiscally prudent for preparing environmental studies, and constructing needed infrastructure improvements.

2. RECRUITMENT

The City's Economic Development Commission and staff shall formulate targeted recruitment strategies for those projects using the marketing information in the technical reports attached to this Element as well as other directories and resources. The recruitment strategy should include financing assistance.

D. OVERALL SUPPORT FOR RETAIL AND SERVICE COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES

The City shall participate in programs to promote the overall health and performance of the retail and service business sectors of the local economy.

1. RECRUITMENT

The Economic Development Commission shall prepare a marketing and recruitment plan that targets businesses that offer goods where demand is not satisfied locally. In addition, the Commission shall recruit those businesses whose goods and services satisfy a regional market as a means of bolstering the local economy and improving shopping opportunities.





development of a healthy tourism industry in the community and is a way of preserving the historic social, cultural, and commercial core of the City. Economic development and redevelopment projects within the downtown core area shall be undertaken in conformance with the policies contained in the Downtown Element of the City's General Plan.

1. RE-AFFIRM A VISION STATEMENT FOR THE DOWNTOWN CORE AREA

Invite the BIA, downtown businesses, property owners, and the Chamber of Commerce to assist in affirming a vision statement for the downtown core that emphasizes the development of business, specialty retail, restaurants, and tourist attractions as part of any overall plan to recreate the downtown as an entertainment center.

2. DEVELOP TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN OR NEAR THE DOWNTOWN CORE AREA

Develop a plan to finance and operate the Atascadero Recreation Center and Stadium Park Amphitheater projects to utilize these facilities as tourist attraction. Consider leasing both facilities to for-profit business operators.

3. SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN CORE

Continue to provide support for the redevelopment, where practicable, of buildings of historic significance within the downtown core for use as restaurants, specialty retail stores, art galleries, second floor residential occupancies, and other appropriate mix of uses.

4. SUPPORT CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS IN AND AROUND THE DOWNTOWN

The City shall continue to support those transportation and circulation improvements, such as the Lewis Avenue Bridge and the Highway 41 extension and ramp improvements at the US Highway 101 interchange, to assure the continued viability of downtown core businesses and tourism attractions.

5. REDEVELOP THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SITE

In conformance with the Downtown Element of the General Plan, the City, the Redevelopment Agency, and the Atascadero Unified School District shall explore alternative land uses for the property currently occupied by the Junior High School. Uses compatible with the downtown core might include retail, services, offices, institutional, open space, and residential, or some mix of such suitable uses.



6. CREATE A REVOLVING LOAN FUND TO ASSIST BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORE AREA.

Use a revolving loan fund (possibly capitalized with Community Development Block Grant funds) to provide low-interest loans and first year rental discounts as incentives for targeted retail or service businesses.

F. SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL LAND AND PROFESSIONAL PARKS

The City shall actively support the development of all of the industrially-zoned land in the City, including support for modern business/professional parks with emphasis on the recruitment of high technology businesses. Efforts should be made to act in partnership with California Polytechnic State University research, and similar training programs, including business incubators, to promote the development of commercial applications of basic research as businesses in these parks. Development of other industrial land for light manufacturing and other appropriate uses shall be supported.

1. REMOVE RETAIL USES AS ALLOWABLE USES IN THE INDUSTRIAL PARK ZONE

Allowing retail sales as a principal use in industrial zones decreases the already limited amount of space available for base or industrial uses. The Zoning Ordinance shall be amended to provide for permitted uses which are consistent with the purpose of these zones as defined in the Land Use Element. Retail sales which are incidental or subordinate to industrial or manufacturing uses may, however, be allowed.

2. TAKE STEPS TO PREPARE THE AREA FOR EXPEDITED DEVELOPMENT

(a) Site Plan

Work in partnership with developers to create a conceptual site plan for the industrial/professional parks.

(b) Utilities and Environmental Studies

Construct necessary sewer lines to serve the areas and prepare the necessary environmental studies to address significant environmental impacts, so that individual projects can receive quick approval under a negative declaration, or tiered Environmental Impact Report (EIR), determination.





(a) Chain Store Retailers

The recruitment effort should make use of retail chain store directories to target those chain stores that fit best with available site locations and market demand for specific goods.

(b) Independent Retailers

This recruitment effort should target successful regional independent retailers that might be interested in locating a second or additional store in Atascadero. Independent retailers will often need financial incentives to relocate. The recruitment effort may be able to assist in obtaining or provide information on grants, low interest loans, rental write-downs, or other incentives to targeted businesses.

The business recruitment effort may benefit from a partnership or cooperative effort with private business incubators in recruiting and locating new business enterprises.

2. PREPARE A RETAIL, SERVICE COMMERCIAL, AND OFFICE SPACE INVENTORY OF ATASCADERO

This inventory would be a valuable planning tool for the Economic Development Commission, Redevelopment Agency, and other City departments. Such an inventory can also be made available for distribution as part of a marketing or promotion program. This inventory shall be maintained and updated as necessary to retain its utility as a planning tool.

3. ENCOURAGE IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT OF RETAIL INVENTORY

Within the boundaries of approved commercial zones, the City should encourage in-fill, redevelopment, recruitment of new stores to fill vacancies, and the formation of clusters of synergistic stores.

4. SUPPORT THE LOCAL PURCHASE OF GOODS AND SERVICES BY THE CITY

The City shall establish a policy and procedures for giving preference to local suppliers of those goods and services required for the operation of the City. To facilitate this policy direction, the City shall maintain a list of local providers of goods and services, and shall actively recruit additions to the list.

E. DOWNTOWN CORE AREA

The revitalization of the downtown core area is valuable to



(c) Negotiate Purchase Agreement Options.

Negotiate an option price with the respective owners of the properties in the area zoned for industrial/professional park development.

4. DEVELOP AN AGGRESSIVE RECRUITMENT PLAN

Prepare an aggressive recruitment plan for targeting industries listed in the market analysis. The marketing plan should emphasize rapid land use and building permit processing and specific quality of life aspects of the Atascadero area that will attract individual corporate managers and Chief Executive Officers.

5. SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF INCUBATOR FACILITIES

Support the creation of incubator facilities within the industrially-zoned lands and/or professional parks. These projects might be joint efforts with developers to promote university research-oriented commercial business applications.

6. PREPARE AN INDUSTRIAL SPACE INVENTORY OF ATASCADERO

This inventory would be a valuable planning tool for the Economic Development Commission, Redevelopment Agency, and other City departments. Such an inventory can also be made available for distribution as part of a marketing or promotion program. This inventory shall be maintained and updated as necessary to retain its utility as a planning tool.

7. SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL/RESEARCH FACILITIES

Areas suitable for professional parks may also prove to be suitable for the development of educational facilities. Where appropriate within industrial/professional park zones, the City shall also support the establishment of educational and/or research facilities. Such facilities could include institutions such as a branch college campus, or other research or industrial support facilities.

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